



Doing Business In Mauritania: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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Chapter 1: Doing Business In Mauritania

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Market Overview

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Mauritania is a Sahelian country of crosscutting Arab and African influences. Despite limited resources, it is seeking to surmount a history of nomadic poverty, Arab nationalism, and state-centered policies by building a sedentary, urbanized society, a pluralist democracy, and a market-based economy.

Twice the size of France (1.09 million sq. km) but with only 2.9 million people, Mauritania has the world's third lowest population density after Mongolia and Namibia. Located at the western edge of the Sahara with 500 miles of Atlantic coastline, Mauritania shares borders with the Western Sahara and Algeria to the north, Mali to the east and south, and Senegal to the south. The country is about 90% desert.

At independence in 1960, about 85% of the population was nomadic. Today only about 5% remain nomads, and fully one-third of the population lives in Nouakchott, the capital. About 70 percent are Arabic-speaking Moors (30 percent "white Moors" and 40 percent "black"), the remainder being drawn from the southern-based, African ethnic groups: Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof. Virtually all are Sunni Muslims.

Mauritania forms a geographical link between North and Sub-Saharan Africa, associated with a long historical tradition of north-south trade, and a culture favorable to free markets, personal mobility and entrepreneurship. Mauritania offers a small but rapidly growing market, with a GDP per capita estimated at about \$400 in 2005. Offshore oil production, expected to start by early 2006, should stimulate local economic growth. Oil revenues are expected to increase the government budget by an initial 20 percent, a figure that will increase further when cost recovery is complete.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has, over the past decade, become increasingly open to foreign trade and investment. With the support of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donors, the Government has liberalized the exchange system, reformed the fiscal and financial systems, and privatized a number of parastatals. Mauritania is highly trade-dependent: in 2004, exports and imports as a percentage of GDP reached 27 and 44 percent, respectively. Almost all the country's consumer goods are imported, covered only partially by exports - principally iron ore and fish. The deficits are covered by substantial foreign aid, both grants and loans. Aid is essential not only for capital development but for government operating expenses and the country's food subsistence needs. In addition to the major multilateral institutions and the G-8 countries, Mauritania also receives significant aid from the Arab world.

Mauritania's foreign trade has been heavily oriented towards Europe and, increasingly, Asia. Trade with the United States has been relatively very small, but has grown significantly in recent years. The U.S. share of total imports grew from 7 to 11 percent between 2002 and 2004, placing the U.S. third Mauritania's leading suppliers. Greater equipment and vehicle purchases by the national mining company (Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière or SNIM) -- America's best customer in Mauritania -- accounted for most of the increase. The commercial environment for U.S. trade and investment is favorable. Mauritania's liberal economic policies, coupled with the advent of petroleum production and exports, could favor continuing capital inflows and economic growth. A number of U.S. companies already have representatives in Mauritania, and many local companies are interested in joint ventures with U.S. firms.

On August 3, 2005, President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya was deposed in a bloodless coup. Military commanders, led by Colonel Ely Ould Mohammed Fal, seized power and established the ruling Military Council for Justice and Democracy to run the country. The council dissolved the Parliament and appointed a transitional government. The transitional government has promised a return to constitutional order through free and fair elections, culminating with a presidential election in March 2007 and the complete turnover of power no later than the end of May 2007.

Mauritania was one of the first 34 countries to be found eligible in 2000 for the trade benefits of (AGOA). On December 22, 2005, however, President Bush terminated Mauritania's designation as of January 1, 2006, because Mauritania is not meeting the required criteria of making continual progress toward establishing the rule of law and political pluralism.

In practice, this requirement has normally been interpreted as ceasing to be fulfilled when a military coup has taken place. Despite all the positive elements happening in Mauritania, the present government came to power by force, rules by decree and is illegitimate. AGOA eligibility could be reinstated upon the return to constitutional order through democratic elections.

In 2002, Mauritania reached its completion point under the enhanced HIPC initiative and Mauritania was declared eligible for debt relief. As a result, Mauritania received approximately \$1.1 billion in debt relief. However, the IMF concluded in May 2005 that the disbursement was non-complying because Mauritania had provided inaccurate information to the FUND. As a result, Mauritania voluntarily repaid the disbursement. The Fund also required Mauritania to provide corrected data for previous years before implementing any new programs.

After the coup, the transitional government announced it would cooperate with the IMF to provide corrected data for the previous years. The IMF Board may determine that Mauritania may need to repay noncompliant disbursements for the years 2001 and 2002. On December 21, the IMF delayed the cancellation of Mauritania's IMF debt under the Multilateral Debt Relief (G8) Initiative.

Over the next ten to twenty years, Mauritania's oil and gas sector should offer major opportunities for American contractors and suppliers. Large upcoming government projects include the construction of a bridge on the Senegal River jointly with the Senegalese Government and the privatization of the electricity parastatal (SOMELEC). Mineral prospecting, electrical equipment and power generation, waterworks and new information technologies generally offer potential for U.S. companies.

American mining and construction equipment, agricultural products, electronics, and used and new clothing have taken significant market shares. Mauritania's new investment code is intended to encourage foreign investment and joint ventures, and the government has been keen to find U.S. companies interested in mineral prospecting and participation in the various privatization programs. Projects funded by international financial institutions (IFIs) also offer opportunities in the areas of construction, irrigation, communications, and consulting.

Market Entry Strategy

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The Mauritanian Market is open to international exporters. It was liberalized in October 1991. The country imports many goods, such as household appliances, machinery and equipment, tools and supplies, food and clothing from everywhere, including the United States. Most imported goods are shipped to Mauritania by sea to the ports of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou or by air to the Nouakchott airport; they also arrive by land from Senegal, Mali and Morocco.

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Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5467.htm>

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Using an Agent or Distributor

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Local businessmen frequently express interest in representing U.S. companies, and the number of those doing so is growing. Commercial agents are found in many sectors, including computers, new and used vehicles, heavy equipment, oil products distribution, oil and mining exploration, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, telecommunications, and electronic tools. In general, these agents have a written contract, and they negotiate sales and purchases on behalf of producers, manufacturers, or dealers. A distributor is an individual or legal entity that purchases goods directly from a producer or distributor for the purpose of resale. The distributor operates independently and is only bound by the written provisions of the distribution agreement. In general, either party, without prior notification, may terminate a distribution agreement of specified duration, at the end of the contract period.

Establishing an Office

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The Government encourages the import of new technologies and the creation of new enterprises such as joint ventures to process fish locally or agro-industries. The Investment Promotion Office ("Guichet Unique de l'Investissement") and the Mauritanian Chamber of Commerce offer assistance and advice to those wishing to establish a business office in Mauritania. The Employers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the "Centre d'Information Mauritanien pour le Developpement Economique et Technique" (CIMDET) maintain listings of business consultants and other information useful to companies wishing to do business in Mauritania.

Direct Marketing

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Direct Marketing is not developed in Mauritania. Since most buyers do not read newspapers and journals, the producers and whole sellers do not use these communications means and prefer to exhibit their products in a large boards. Graphic billboards on major thoroughfares and roadside banners are an important advertising medium for the largely illiterate public. The number of billboards is increasing rapidly in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, as they are a relatively inexpensive means of advertising. Radio and TV are also used for advertising, but are considered expensive by many local companies. Trade events, such as shows and exhibitions, are limited in Mauritania. The inhabitants of Nouakchott, however, are acquainted with fairs, and they enjoy visiting and buying the products on display. A great deal of information also passes by word of mouth.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

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Mauritania's existing joint ventures are primarily with other Arab countries and are mainly in the mineral, fishing, telecommunications, and banking sectors. However, businesses in many sectors seek to expand such ventures with a wide array of foreign partners, including companies from the United States. The government also offers a wide range of incentives to foreign investors.

Selling to the Government

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Government procurement is divided into three distinct categories:

- (a) Procurement relating to large development projects (involving more than \$10 million), almost always financed by multilateral institutions (World Bank, Arab Fund, Islamic Bank of Development, African Development Bank, etc.)
- (b) Procurement relating to medium and small-scale projects financed jointly by the government and one or more development partners
- (c) Procurement relating to small projects valued at less than \$1 million, and totally financed by the government itself

For (a) and (b), procurements are made through foreign government tenders (avis d'appel d'offres). For (c), procurement is made by mutual agreement, without a public tender. Such direct awards are also used for certain sensitive procurements and projects, e.g., relating to security issues.

The Government's Central Procurement Board ("Commission Centrale des Marchés"), which falls under the Prime Minister's authority, is responsible for monitoring compliance with procurement regulations and conducting most government negotiations with foreign suppliers. For large or complex projects, the Government often requires bidders to submit letters of interest, in order to be short-listed prior to the issuance of a restricted tender. This closed bidding has been widely applied in the privatization process in Mauritania. Therefore, it is very important to be informed of the project, and to respond with "expressions of interest," ahead of the published tender. The World Bank is assisting the Central Procurement Board to improve its procedures, the transparency of its operations, and its implementation of existing regulations. The regulations governing the Procurement Board are available at the Investment Promotion Office.

Distribution and Sales Channels

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Almost all of Mauritania's imported goods enter Mauritania via Nouakchott's "Friendship Port." From there, they are trucked to wholesalers, distributors, and variously distributed to the retail sector. Much of the import trade is accounted for by large wholesalers, especially those involved in the 10 or so leading family conglomerates that dominate so much of Mauritania's economy. Agents operating on commission deal mainly in electronic components or heavy machinery and spare parts.

Selling Factors/Techniques

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Most goods are retailed through small shops (boutiques and groceries), or by vendors in the sprawling, often open-air markets so prominent in Nouakchott and other towns. The informal sector remains pervasive, involved in everything from the sale of livestock and vehicles to spare parts, used clothes, and vegetables. Medium-sized stores and "supermarkets" are increasingly popular, however, especially in Nouakchott.

Electronic Commerce

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This commerce is not used within Mauritanian territory. Very few Mauritanian use Internet service to purchase products/services. They prefer to visit the country of origin and talk directly with the suppliers. Some potential importers have the privilege to purchase their products by a simple phone call or fax to their European or Asian suppliers.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

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There are few qualified advertising agencies in Mauritania. In general, advertising is done in Arabic and French through newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV. As said earlier, most buyers don't read newspapers that limited the advertising. Any company or distributor interested in advertising his or her products, there are about 30 newspapers, although no more than a dozen appear with regularity, and only two private newspapers appears daily. The most prominent newspapers are as follows:

Journal HORIZONS (in French) and CHAAB (the Arabic version) (Official)
B.P. 467
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 525-5883
Fax: [222] 525-3170/525-4587
Mr. Mohamed Ould Hamady, Director

LE CALAME (Arabic and French versions)
B.P. 1059
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Fax: [222] 525-7555
Mr. Habib Ould Mahfoud, President and Managing Director

LA TRIBUNE
B.P. 6227
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 525-4492
Fax: [222] 525-0209
Mr. Mohamed Fall Ould Oumère, President and Managing Director

L'Eveil Hebdo
B.P. 387
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel & Fax: [222] 525-6714
Mr. Sy Mamoudou, President and Managing Director

Nouakchott Info (private daily, Arabic and French versions)
B.P. 1905
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 525-0271
Fax: [222] 525-5484
Mr. Cheikhna Ould Nenni, President and Managing Director

Le Journal
Tel: [222] 630-5339
Mr. Yedaly Fall, Managing Director

L'Authentique
Ilot T, Teveragh Zeina, Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel & Fax: [222] 525-9962
Mobile: [222] 630-3648/651-2130
Mr. Oumar Ould Moctar, Director

L'ESSOR
B.P. 5310
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 529-1983
Fax: [222] 525-0407
E-mail: lessorjournal@yahoo.com
Mr. Sidi El Moctar Cheiguer, Director

Pricing

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Selling price is based on the total cost of the products from the producer until store of the seller, increased by the profit margin. Accordingly, the price of products varies from a local to another and from a shop to another in the same local.

Sales Service/Customer Support

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All reliable suppliers provide sale services to their customers. For a certain period after the sale, this service is free of charge. After the guarantee period is expired, the supplier may charge some repair fees to his/her customer. The customer support is developed in electronic components, vehicles, heavy equipment and fishing boats.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property

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Property rights are protected under the Mauritanian civil code, which is modeled on the French one. However, biased application of the law by the Mauritanian judiciary has been a problem for some local companies. In practice, it is very hard to gain redress of grievances through the courts.

Mauritania is a member of the MIGA and the African Organization of Intellectual Property (OAPI). In joining the latter, member states agreed to honor intellectual property rights principles and to establish uniform procedures of implementation. These international agreements include the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Hague

Convention for the Registration of Designs and Industrial Models, the Lisbon Convention for the Protection and International Registration of Original Trade Names, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Washington Treaty on Patents, and the Vienna Treaty on the Registration of Trade Names.

Local Professional Services

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Mauritanian Employers Association
B.P. 383
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-21-60 or 525-33-01
Mr. Mohamed Ould Bouamatou, President
Mr. Seyid Ould Abdellahi, Secretary General

Mining and Industry Association
B.P. 3475
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-39-74
Mr. Lafdal Ould Bettah, President

Fishing National Association
B.P. 43
Nouadhibou, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 574-50-89
Fax: [222] 574-54-30
fnp@toptechology.mr
Mr. Mohamed Mahmoud Sidina Sadegh, Secretary General

Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM)
Tel: [222] 525-22-54
Fax: [222] 525-36-89
Mr. Mr. Youssouf Ould Abdel Jelil, Manager

Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development
Tel: [222] 525-92-37
Fax: [222] 525-92-37
Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Ahmed, Representative

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SNIM: www.snim.com

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Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment

- [Agricultural Sector](#)

Agriculture and Livestock

Located in the Western Sahara, Mauritania is 80 to 90 percent desert. This is a moving proportion, one that shifted upward with the catastrophic drought of the 1970s, and periodically rises again during years of poor rainfall. Agriculture and herding continue to play an important role in the economy, generating about 20 percent of GDP in 2004 and employing about 30 percent of the labor force.

Although self-sufficiency may be untenable in a desert country like Mauritania, agricultural development is given high priority by both government and donors. Oasis farming, although given much attention, is oriented to subsistence production and for relatively small populations. Greater hopes are focused on the Senegal River Valley, where virtually all the country's arable land is located. Government irrigation schemes, backed by an 11-year World Bank support program, include rehabilitation of a projected 11,000 hectares of cultivable land along the river. Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali also collaborate in the Senegal River Valley Development Organization (OMVS), which has constructed large-scale dams in Diama (Senegal) and Manantali (Mali) for irrigation and generation of electrical power.

Irrigation and land reform laws, designed to allow both local farmers and outside investors to take advantage of irrigation projects, have encouraged expanded commercial production, especially of rice and millet, in the valley area. At the same time, recurrent drought has pushed migrant herders and their livestock towards the south, creating pressure on local farmers and stimulating large-scale fencing to protect croplands from marauding herds. Estimated livestock (in thousand of heads) at end-2004 were: sheep and goats (8.8 million), cattle (1.5 million) and camels (1.2 million). These numbers can fluctuate following the raining season. Nonetheless, Mauritania has several thriving dairy companies, led by Tiviski and Top-Lait, producing fresh and long-life dairy products including milk, yogurt and even camel cheese.

However, Mauritania's cereal production continues to be far from sufficient to meet the population's needs. The country's cereal production in 2005-2006 (148,670 metric tons) covered only 24 percent of its total needs, requiring 336,430 metric tons of imports over this year. The Food Security Commissioner foresees that the food aid will reach 17,000 metric tons and the balance (319,430 metric tons) will be commercially imported. Mauritanian authorities are encouraging private investment in the agricultural sector to modernize production, improve the quality of cereals (mainly rice and wheat), and expand irrigation, processing, and exports. Many farmers are interested in acquiring modern irrigation equipment and combine-harvesters to improve the quality of cereals along the Senegal River Valley. American exporters of agricultural commodities, equipment and technologies, and importers of specialty farm and dairy products, should explore opportunities in this sector.

Commercial Sectors

- [Mining](#)
- [Fishing](#)
- [Offshore Petroleum](#)

Mining

Overview

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	2003	2004	2005 (estimated)
Total Market Size	10.5	11.5	12.2
Total Local Production	10.3	11.3	11.9
Total Exports	9.6	11.1	11.6
Total Imports	0.2	0.2	0.3
Imports from the U.S.	0	0	0

Million of metric tons

In spite of heavy global competition and occasional price declines, the mining sector continues to be Mauritania's largest foreign exchange generator, accounting for 12 percent of Mauritania's GDP in 2004. Virtually all-mineral exports consist of iron ore, of which Mauritania has exceptional deposits estimated to include 190 million metric tons of naturally rich iron ore (66 percent iron content), as well as billions of tons of lower-quality ore. These deposits are exploited by the mining parastatal Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM), in which the Mauritanian state has a 78.35 percent stake. The remaining shares are distributed as follows: Industrial Bank of Kuwait (7.17 percent), Arab Mining Company (5.66 percent), Irak Fund for External Development (4.59 percent) Bureau de Recherches et de Participations Minières (2.30 percent), Islamic Bank of Development (1.79 percent) and private Mauritaniens (0.14 percent). With 3,772 employees in 2004, SNIM is by far the largest business in Mauritania and is among the 500 top enterprises in Africa.

Mauritania ranks as the 15th largest iron ore producer worldwide, its annual exports of 10-11,000 metric tons falling far behind the more than 200,000 tons marketed by Brazil, for instance, or even the 50,000 tons produced in the United States. But a large proportion of its reserves are of very high quality (over 60 percent metal content), attracting relatively high prices, profits, and demand. Production is centered on Zouérate, a classic company town, where SNIM's repair and machine-building shops service the mine's massive trucks and drills. Its railroad, powered by American-made locomotives, carry the ore 700 km. to the mineral port at Nouadibou. Proven reserves in early 2004 were 190 million tons of naturally rich ore and 660 million tons of ferruginous quartzite – yielding a predicted 12 million tons a year for a good century to come.

The company target is to produce 12 million metric tons from 2005, assuring the quality of its production. Good management, sustained investments in equipment and training and increased worker productivity have buoyed SNIM's performance even in years of poor prices and demand. Low prices led to a slight drop in exports, to 9.6 million tons, in 2003. In 2004 and 2005, however, thanks especially to rising Chinese demand, world

iron prices rebounded by 25 percent and SNIM is committed to export nearly 12 million metric tons. This is good news for American exporters of mining equipment: in 2003, SNIM purchased \$23 million in equipment and spare parts from U.S. companies, representing 32 percent of the company's total imports. The company plans to purchase goods worth at least \$35 million from the U.S. in 2006.

Apart from the SNIM holdings, the Mauritanian government -- as is the case with offshore oil and gas -- encourages private investment in onshore mineral exploration and production. One area activity is in the area of Guelb Moghrein, near the northern town of Akjoujt, once a major center for copper mining. In June and July 2004, the Emirati company Wadi Al Rawda and Canada's First Quantum signed an agreement with the Mauritanian authorities to revive copper and gold production at Guelb Moghrein, where work has started in June 2005. Mauritania is estimated to have 23 million metric tons of copper reserves.

A number of foreign companies have acquired exploration permits, focused on copper, gold, diamonds and oil. The French oil firm, Total, has acquired large concession tracts in the Taoudenni Basin of central Mauritania, where petroleum exploration contracts have also been granted to Wintershall (German), Repsol (Spanish), and CNTI (Chinese). Other companies are currently negotiating for onshore petroleum exploration rights, such as Sphere Investments (Australia). Other mineral prospectors include BHP Minerals (Australian), Rex Diamond Mining Corporation (Canadian), FMC Technologies (American), Defiance Mining (Canada), Hardman Resources (Australia), Ashton West Africa Property Ltd. (British), Diamet minerals (Australia), La Source (French), Groupment Burns Trading Pty Ltd. (Australia), and Wadi Al Rawda (UAE).

Mauritania also has significant reserves of salt (450 million metric tons), which is mined traditionally at a number of locations, phosphates (160 million metric tons), and the world's largest deposits of gypsum (9 billion metric tons). Exploitation of gypsum, located in Mauritania's south-central area, has been inhibited by the still prohibitive cost of transportation to the coast. Given rising world prices and demand, commercialization of Mauritania's gypsum reserves is probably a matter of time.

Best Products/Services

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Best prospects and services in this sector include:

- Excavators,
- Crushers
- Shovel drills
- Electric Engines
- Mining Engines
- Trucks
- Cranes
- Tractors
- Graders
- Explosives
- Conveyor Belts
- Tires
- Grinding Balls
- Rollers for Conveyors

- Tools and materials for railway

Opportunities

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The Mining sector (mainly iron ore exploration and exportation) constitutes to, on average 12 percent of Mauritania's GDP and 56 percent of its exports. Mining equipment, heavy machinery and spare parts are among SNIM's imports and constitute the biggest U.S. export goods here. Mining production should increase substantially in 2006 as a result of investments made by SNIM in 2004 and 2005 in order to respond to the China's iron demand.

Resources

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- Government Agencies:

-- Ministry of Mines and Industry

B.P. 199

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Tel: (222) 525 30 83

Fax: (222) 525 69 37

E-mail: mmi@mauritania.mr

Mr. Mohamed Ali Ould Sidi Mohamed, Minister

-- SNIM-sem

B.P. 42

Nouadhibou, Mauritania

Tel: (222) 574 51 74

Fax: (222) 574 53 96

Internet: www.snim.com

Mr. Youssouf Ould Abdel Jelil, General Manager

-- SNIM's Office in France

7, rue du 4 septembre

75002, Paris, France

Tel: 33(01)42-96-80-90

Fax: 33(01)42-96-12-26

-- Direction of Mines and Geology

B.P 199

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Tel: (222) 525-3225

Fax: (222) 525-3225

E-mail: dmg.sigm@mauritel.mr

Mr. Wane Ibrahima Lamine, Director

-- Mining Cadastre Unit

Tel: (222) 529 35 51 or 529 35 52

E-mail: cadastreminier@compunet.mr

- Professional Associates:

Industry and Mining Association
B.P. 5501
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: (222) 525 03 04 and 525 82 34
Fax: (222) 525 69 55
Mr. Lafdal Ould Bettah, President

Fishing

Overview

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	2003	2004	2005 (estimated)
Total Market Size	400	430	480
Total Local Production	400	430	480
Total Exports	350	390	440
Total Imports	0	0	0
Imports from the U.S.	0	0	0

Thousands of metric tons

Along its 754 km Atlantic coastline, Mauritania enjoys a 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that contains some of the world's richest fishing grounds. The fishing sector contributes towards 9 percent of the GDP, 29 percent of budget receipts and generates about 35 percent of employment. The sector continues to be the country's second largest foreign exchange earner in 2005. Fishing income went down last year but it is expected to go up in 2006. The sector suffers from over-harvesting (affecting cephalopods, in particular) and an aging and poorly maintained local fleet.

In response, the Mauritanian government has extended the offshore Exclusion Zone from 6 miles to 12, improved its surveillance capacities, and extended the biological pause from 30 to 60 days (September 1-October 31) each year. Initially restricted to deep-water fishing, the temporary ban ("repos biologique") was expanded in 2004 to cover pelagic fishing in some zones close to shore. Despite these efforts, experts believe Mauritanian waters are still being over-fished, with some species (octopus, squid and cuttlefish) in actual decline.

Mauritania's total annual catch is estimated at 450,000 tons, of which a large part is exported directly, without offloading, to destinations overseas. A majority of the 30 ships that trawl Mauritania's EEZ are devoted to cephalopods and other deep water species; the rest are divided between pelagic fishing, on the one hand, shrimp and lobster, on the other, with some 50 or 60 ships each.

The Mauritanian fleet is largely composed of about 140 old Chinese-made boats and focused primarily on deepwater fishing. Effective modernization has been inhibited by a rule limiting foreign shares in fishing boats to 49 percent -- an exception to Mauritania's otherwise liberal investment laws. Given the problems affecting its own fishing sector, the Mauritanian government has signed a series of agreements granting fishing rights to the European Union fleet. The 2001-2006 agreement increased the total compensation from 267 million to 430 million Euros, barred EU ships from coastal zones now reserved

to traditional fishermen, but increased the number of authorized trawlers to 137. Mauritania and the EU are now in negotiations to renew the agreement. Another 20-30 foreign ships, mainly Eastern European, are licensed to fish in Mauritanian waters.

The Mauritanian Government has encouraged onshore fish processing, to increase employment and generate value added. Mauritanian exporters began exporting frozen fish in the 1980s, adding additional processing stages in the following decade. There are now about 15 medium-sized processors, located largely in the northern port town of Nouadhibou. Processors enjoy government support, fairly easy access to land, and inexpensive manpower. They are under pressure, however, to improve standards: Mauritania's Oceanographic and Fisheries Institute, "IMROP," which works closely with the EU and Japan, is a key agent in the enforcement of quality and sanitary controls.

Given the strategic importance of Mauritania's fishing sector, the World Bank has targeted it for private sector development and reform. The 2004 and 2005 macroeconomic strategy includes measures to encourage joint ventures, upgrade the local fishing fleet, and improve marine resource management and monitoring. The Mauritanian government has backed a number of infrastructure developments such as the Nouadhibou port extension, warehouse development, and the construction of a new harbor for artisanal fishing, partially financed by Japan. The Japanese (leading consumers of Mauritanian cephalopods), along with the EU and African Development Bank (AFDB), are also backing projects to improve fishing techniques and equipment, marketing, and conservation and packaging in the traditional sector -- which produces less revenue than industrial fishing but generates far more jobs.

Best Prospects/Services

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The best prospects include:

- Modern fishing equipment
- Boat repair plants
- Fish conservation and packaging techniques
- Ventures in fish processing

Opportunities

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The fishing sector offers a variety of opportunities for U.S. sales. Many processors, eager to modernize and expand their plants, would welcome more sophisticated equipment and or investment partners from the United States. Many nationally-owned boats are old and due for replacement: new or used boats from the U.S. might find a market here. U.S. companies may also become joint owners with Mauritanian partners in fishing ventures, though they would be limited to a 49 percent share.

Resources

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Ministry of Fishery and Maritime Economy
Tel: (222) 525-4607
Fax: (222) 525-9970
Mr. Sidi Mohamed Ould Sidina, Minister

National Fishing Association
Tel: (222) 574-5089 or 574-5916
Fax: (222) 574-5430
E-mail: fnp@topotechnology.mr
Mr. Mohamed Mahmoud Sidina Sadegh, Secretary General

Offshore Petroleum

Overview

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	2003	2004	2005 (estimated)
Total Market Size	420	425	450
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	0	0	0
Total Imports	420	425	450
Imports from the U.S.	0	0	0

(Thousands of metric tons)

U.S. companies, starting in the 1960s, long played a leading role in oil exploration in Mauritania. After what was thought at the time, however, to be unpromising finds, they gradually withdrew. A second wave of prospecting began in the 1990s, initially led by Hardman Resources of Australia. By then, more favorable government policies, new technologies and higher world oil prices had radically changed the picture, and a number of other companies rapidly joined the consortia that formed to explore Mauritania's offshore Blocks 1 through 8. To date, the majority share partners and operators of these Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), have been either Australia's Woodside Petroleum (Blocks 2-6) or Dana Petroleum of the U.K. (Blocks 1, 7 and 8).

Since 2001, exploratory drilling has revealed increasingly significant deposits of offshore oil, first in the Chinguetti field (block 4), then in nearby Tiof (both controlled by Woodside-led PSCs). Substantial gas reserves have also been identified in Woodside's Banda and in Dana's Pelican fields, estimated at 1 and 3 trillion cubic feet, respectively. In January 2004, Woodside announced the commercial viability of Chinguetti, estimated to hold 142 million barrels of oil. Production should take off in the first quarter of 2006, with an expected initial flow of 75,000 barrels a day over a 7 to 10 year period. Current investment costs, covering both new production wells and infrastructure, and a new round of exploratory drilling, are running at \$650 million.

Prospects for further growth in the offshore petroleum sector are excellent. In addition to the major new exploration program already underway, a second phase of drilling, expected to cost another \$150 million, is likely to begin in the second or third year of production. The Tiof reserves, moreover, are already expected to be anywhere from two to four times greater than in Chinguetti. If tests are positive, the fields could be in production by 2007, providing the Chinguetti installations with a major additional production hub. Industry sources are also fairly confident that future discoveries will make commercial production of gas a reality as well.

At current price levels, liquefied natural gas (LNG) production would be feasible once another 3 million cubic feet are found -- not unlikely in these vast offshore tracts, some four times larger than the North Sea fields. Aware of the area's gas potential, British Gas bought into Hardman's Mauritanian holdings in early 2004. In July, Wintershall AG, the leading German oil and gas concern, acquired a 40 percent share in Dana Petroleum's Block 8.

The Mauritanian government has been very hospitable to oil exploration, and is eager for production to begin as soon as possible. As requested by the industry, it recently approved key legislation establishing a Simplified Tax Regime for the oil sector, allowing contract awards and investments to move forward on schedule. It is not yet clear if the government will choose to simply be a recipient of royalties or if it will use its assets to buy into the industry as an investment partner. In any case, the Ministry of Mines is actively increasing its administrative and technical expertise in the petroleum area: in March 2004, a Director was appointed for the Ministry's new Chinguetti Project office, and recruitment of additional support staff is currently underway.

Best Prospects/Services

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The best prospects are oil and gas research and exploration in areas not already covered.

Opportunities

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The new Mauritanian oil and gas sector offers wide opportunities to foreign petroleum and gas companies. The Government is looking for experienced companies in this field for doing more researches and establishing joint venture with the national oil company, Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures.

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Ministry of Energy and Oil
Tel: (222) 525-9515/5254307
Mr. Mohamed Lemine Cherif, Director of Hydrocarbons

Société Mauritanienne d'Entreposage de Produits Pétroliers
Tel: (222) 525-2646/525-1301
Fax: (222) 525-4608
E-mail: mepp@mauritel.mr

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Chapter 5: Trade Regulations and Standards

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- [Trade Barriers](#)
- [Import Requirements and Documentation](#)
- [U.S. Export Controls](#)
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Import Tariffs

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In spite of relatively high tariffs, import demand is growing. Import tax is usually based on the local market value of the item instead of the amount listed on the commercial invoice. Customs uses a reference list of items with the respective import taxes and duties; tariffs vary according to the importance attributed to the commodity (between zero and 45%, for instance, for "essential" goods). Foreign investors frequently complain of corruption and complexity in customs procedures.

Trade Barriers

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Non-tariff barriers are also significant. Mauritania's limited infrastructure makes the transport of persons and goods relatively difficult and expensive. Overseas air and maritime transportation is also limited and costly. There are also communication problems. Arabic is the official language, but French is used in almost all international business activities. Only a small (but growing) number of businesspeople can conduct business in English.

Import Requirements and Documentation

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The documents generally required of Mauritanian importers include the commercial invoice, the bill of lading or certificate of origin, and the certificate of inspection given by the "Société Générale de Surveillance." The commercial invoice should contain the name and address of seller and buyer; place and date the invoice was prepared; method of shipment; quantity, description, and price of goods; delivery and payment terms. Payments of large amounts are usually made through irrevocable and confirmed Letters of Credit under the control of the Central Bank of Mauritania or through direct transfer from the bank of the importer abroad to the bank of the exporter. Cash payments are also frequently used for smaller purchases.

To facilitate import procedures, the Minister of Commerce can grant special authorization to Mauritians who do not hold a regular import/export license. In such cases, applicants should specify the quality and quantity of the items, country of origin, and date of import. Importers require pre-shipment inspection and quality control. The certificate of inspection should accompany the imported goods.

U.S. Export Controls

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Due to Mauritania's establishment of ties with Israel, the Arab League-imposed secondary and tertiary boycotts against Israel are no longer enforced. There are no restrictions on U.S. exports to Mauritania for non-prohibited goods.

Temporary Entry

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Personal effects, including professional equipment, that are carried by hand or in luggage may be temporarily imported into Mauritania free of duties and taxes under the Customs Convention on Temporary Importation of Professional Equipment. Goods imported for exhibitions may enter under an ATA carnet, which may be obtained from the U.S. Council of the International Chamber of Commerce.

Labeling and Marking Requirements

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Product literature and labeling should be in Arabic and/or in Latin characters. The labeling should indicate the production and expiration dates, the country of origin as well as the nature, quality and quantity of product in the packaging or container. It is forbidden to import or distribute expired products in Mauritania.

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

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In accordance with Islamic strictures, Mauritians are prohibited from importing alcoholic drinks and pork. Imports of firearms are also prohibited.

Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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All imported goods, except those previously exempted by law, are subject to import duties. Import duties are generally calculated according to the goods' original invoice price (CIF value). When the buyer does not present the original invoice, the Customs Service evaluates the market value of the product and applies the respective rate. Imported goods must be declared at Customs after landing, and the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) inspects their price, quality and quantity and compares these with those reported in the original invoice.

Mauritania's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the EU/Africa Caribbean Pacific (EU/ACP) Lomé Pact has supplied some momentum to its trade liberalization policies. However, Mauritania is one of several developing countries benefiting from a ten-year exemption in the application of WTO requirements. Customs procedures are extremely complicated and discouraging for importers who are not familiar with the Mauritanian system. Since 2002, the Customs offices were totally computerized, thanks to European Union support, reducing to some extent the administrative complexities and time required.

Customs contact information:

Customs Office
Boite Postale 198

Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: (222) 525-1404 or 525-6302
Fax: (222) 525-5615 or 525-6304
Mr. Ahmed Ould Mohamedou, Manager

Friendship Port Customs
Tel: (222) 525-3418
Mr. Ahmed Ould Guenaye, General Manager

Standards

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Overview

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Mauritania is in transitional stage with respect to application of WTO regulations and standards. Since the elimination of import-export licenses, most imports do not require preliminary authorization. However, the Government plans to create a government agency to regulate import and export of some products considered to be sensitive, such as live animals, sugar, rice, pharmaceutical products, arms, narcotics and explosives. Mauritania requires pre-shipment inspection of goods costing more than \$5,000 (F.O.B). The imports are inspected again in Nouakchott port by the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS), as said earlier. The Government intends to extend the role of SGS to other standards controls. The Government also plans to establish a foodstuffs control and fraud repression laboratory.

Standards Organizations

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Mauritania does not yet have a standards system or quality control agency, although one is being planned. Unofficially, major importers (for instance, SNIM) use French or American security and sanitary norms to evaluate goods.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

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There are no testing laboratories for imported goods. However, the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) inspects the conformity of the goods (nature, quality, quantity and price) with the purchase documents (commercial invoice and bill of lading).

Product Certification

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There are no requirements for product certification. Buying decisions are based on product expiration date, price and quality. Few importers require the use of their personal labeling in packaging.

Accreditation

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Accreditation bodies for trade regulation and standard monitoring are very limited. To date, there is only the Swiss-based SGS, accredited in Mauritania to inspect imports at the Nouakchott Port, particularly food and pharmaceutical products.

Publication of Technical Regulations

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Proposed changes in technical regulations are usually not published. However, all final regulations are published in the national gazette, the "Journal Officiel de la République Islamique de Mauritanie," and copies are distributed to relevant government agencies.

Labeling and Marking

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Product literature and labeling should be in Arabic and/or in Latin characters. The labeling should indicate the production and expiration dates, the country of origin as well as the nature, quality and quantity of product in the packaging or container. It is forbidden to import or distribute expired products in Mauritania.

Contacts

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The government agencies that develop trade and investment standards are:

Direction de la Promotion du Commerce Extérieur (DPCE)
Ministère du Commerce, de l'Artisanat et du Tourisme
B.P. 182, Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: (222) 525-3572
Contact: Mr. Mohamed Ould Hitt

Direction de la Promotion de l'Investissement (DPI) (known as "Guichet Unique")
Ministère des Affaires Economiques et du Développement
Tel: (222) 529-0435
Fax: (222) 529-0435
Contact: Mr. Kelly Oumar Sada

Direction de l'Industrie
Ministère des Mines et de l'Industrie
B.P. 387, Nouakchott
Tel: (222) 525-7266/525-3351

Fax: (222) 525-6937

Contact: Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Mamoune, Director

Direction de l'Agriculture

Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement

Tel: (222) 525-1500, 529-0808, 525-7989

Contact Mr. Moma Ould Hamahoullah, Director

The DPCE is currently working on various commercial reforms, including procedural improvements, export promotion, and the eventual implementation of WTO regulations and standards. DPI, in conjunction with the U.N. and the International Chamber of Commerce, recently produced a "Guide de l'Investissement en Mauritanie". The Direction of Agriculture plans to publish annual lists indicating vegetable species the importation of which is prohibited, restricted or subject to preliminary authorization.

Trade Agreements

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Mauritania has trade and investment agreements and protection with member countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) as well as with Saudi Arabia, France, Belgium and Romania (para 14). In addition, Mauritania is a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union (EU) and the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and thus enjoys free access to the EU market. As a least-developed country, Mauritania benefits from duty-free access to the European market under the Everything-But-Arms initiative. Since 1987, the Government has signed three fishery agreements with the European Union, the last covering the period July 2001- July 2006.

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Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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Openness to Foreign Investment

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The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania continues to encourage foreign direct investment and economic liberalization. The government's investment and development policy emphasizes private sector development, seen as the main engine of economic growth. In line with ongoing World Bank/IMF structural reform programs, the government privatized several parastatals in the late 1990's, encouraging foreign investors to purchase shares. The orientation towards privatization and liberalization is expected to continue in 2006.

The investment code has reorganized the legal and institutional framework, extending the capacity of the Consolidated Office for Investments — a "One-Stop Investment Shop" (Guichet Unique) for potential investors. The creation of the "Guichet Unique" in 1998 simplifies and facilitates:

- Applications for investment licenses
- Administrative formalities and procedures
- Establishment of business enterprises
- Acquisition of work permits for foreign nationals

Privatization, liberalization, and investment incentives have figured prominently in Mauritania's World Bank and IMF-inspired economic programs. The following are the legal guarantees offered to any entity (national or foreign) wishing to invest capital under the investment code:

- Freedom of establishment and capital investment, in accordance with the laws and regulations in place (Art. 3.1)
- Freedom to transfer foreign capital (Art. 5.1)
- The ability to transfer professional income of foreign employees (Art. 5.2)
- The equal treatment of Mauritanian and foreign individuals and legal entities (Art. 6)

The investment code and the "Guichet Unique" laws are those that govern the foreign investment in Mauritania. These laws apply to all sectors of the national economy, with the exception of the following sub-sectors (which are governed by other specific laws and regulations):

- Purchasing for resale on the local market without further processing
- Activities governed by the current legislation on banking regulations, except for leasing activities

- Activities governed by the current regulations on insurance and reinsurance
- Activities in the mining and hydrocarbons sectors
- Communications and telecommunications
- Water and electricity supply

The "Guichet Unique" selects and recommends useful investment projects to the Council of Ministers, whose meetings are chaired weekly by the Head of State. In general, all projects submitted to the Council of Ministers are accepted. Vendors for large, government-directed projects are usually selected through a tender process. After issuing an invitation to tenders, the Central Market Commission ("Commission Centrale des Marches") selects the offer that best fulfills Government requirements. The screening process, in principle, should be transparent, routine and non-discriminatory; it does not impede investment nor limit competition.

No sectors are closed to investment. The mining, fishing, banking, energy and tourism sectors actively seek foreign direct investment. The investment code identifies activities eligible for the Duty-Free Zones Program ("Points Francs"), which guarantees certain advantages, such as exemption from export duties and taxes (Art. 8.1). This provides incentives for businesses that produce goods and services intended exclusively for export, and/or that develop exports of Mauritanian-manufactured products.

Foreign investors generally receive the same treatment as Mauritanian investors, subject to the provisions of treaties and agreements concluded by the Government with other countries (Art. 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of the investment code). Foreign investors have the same access as Mauritians to courts of law (Art. 7.1 and 7.2). Nonetheless, the success of foreign investors will depend in large part on their successful collaboration with local partners who understand the local market and government. Contracts are protected by the civil and commercial codes, although court enforcement and dispute settlement can in practice be difficult to obtain.

With the exception of fishing companies (where foreign investment is limited to a 49 percent share), Mauritania has no discriminatory policies against foreign investment, imports, or exports. Mauritania is a signatory of the EU/ACP Lome Convention, which gives underdeveloped nations certain advantages and preferential treatment when exporting or importing some products to or from EU member countries. Mauritania is also a member of the Arab Maghreb Union, which was created in 1988 to work toward the political and economic integration of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. Stated economic goals include a common market with a single currency, Maghreb-wide corporations, unified customs zones, and freedom of movement for capital and individuals.

Mauritania has been a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) since 1996, which protects direct foreign investment against political risks. Mauritania also has bilateral agreements with France, Belgium and Romania for investment promotion and protection. Other agreements exist with Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Italy, Lebanon, Qatar, Yemen, Korea, Arab League and

OPEP Funds. Negotiations are underway for investment treaties with South Africa, Egypt, and Malaysia.

Conversion and Transfer Policies

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There are no legal or policy restrictions on converting or transferring funds associated with an investment. Any investor is guaranteed the free transfer of convertible currencies at a legal market rate, subject to the availability of such currencies. Similarly, foreigners working in Mauritania are guaranteed the prompt transfer of their professional salaries. (Art. 5.2).

In theory, the local currency, the ouguiya, is freely convertible within Mauritania. (It is illegal to export ouguiyas). Hard currencies can be found, in principle, either in commercial banks or in private exchange offices. In practice, they may be difficult to obtain; individuals and smaller companies may have to resort to informal markets, where foreign exchange may cost considerably more than the official rate (approx. 300 ouguiya to one dollar). This situation is expected to change in the coming months due to the petroleum production starting the first quarter of 2006.

The average delay period for remitting investment returns is currently three weeks, depending on availability of foreign exchange in the bank of investor and the Central Bank conditions that gives priority to import payments. However, investors can remit through exchange offices that are legally authorized to perform such operations. The Governor of the Central Bank has taken several new measures to strengthen Mauritania's foreign exchange market and banking system through the increase of foreign exchange supplies to the commercial banks, making currency distribution fairer and requiring the repatriation of all fish export revenues through the Central Bank.

Expropriation and Compensation

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The Investment Code ensures that, if the Government expropriates private property, the Mauritanian government will provide appropriate and prompt compensation, exempt from duties and taxes (Art. 4 and 5.1.c). Expropriation is not current in Mauritania. Only one government expropriation has occurred since independence: the takeover of the French mining company, MIFERMA, in November 1974. Compensation was paid by mutual agreement between the two parties. In 2003, the Mauritanian government annulled a major contract with a British company, covering national petroleum supplies and management of storage and refining facilities in Nouadhibou. Again, compensation was negotiated and paid by mutual agreement between the two parties. The Civilian Code, in addition to the mining and fishing, forces the ownership in all sectors of the economy.

Dispute Settlement

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There have not been any investment disputes over the past few years, except for the cancellation of the 2003 contract for petroleum supplies. Disputes between individuals or legal entities and the Government related to the investment code are settled by an arbitration procedure to which both parties have agreed, and in accordance with the following agreements (Art. 7.2 of the investment code):

-- The 1965 Convention on the Settlement of Disputes Related to Investments between States and Nationals of other States, also known as the Washington Convention.

-- The 1958 New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards.

-- Other agreements and treaties that have been concluded between the government and the state of the concerned individual or legal entity and which address the protection of investments.

Absent other arrangements between the parties, an ad-hoc arbitration court will be set up in accordance with the rules of arbitration of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (Art. 7.2.c. of the investment code). Official mechanisms for enforcing property and contractual rights are Ordinance no. 89-126 creating the Contracts and Obligations Code; Law no. 99-035 creating the Civil, Commercial and Administrative procedure Code; and Law no. 2000-06 creating the Arbitration Code.

The country has a Commercial Code and related civil laws, but application and enforcement remain limited. The country does not have bankruptcy laws. The government accepts binding international arbitration of investment disputes between foreign investors and government authorities (see par. 18). In addition, there are domestic mechanisms for arbitration, both through traditional religious institutions and through the courts.

Performance Requirements and Incentives

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Mauritania is in a transitional stage with respect to application of its WTO commitments. The Government offers tax benefits, including exemptions in some instances, to enterprises in the priority sectors listed in its investment code. In the case of imported "dumped" goods, deemed to be competing unfairly with a priority enterprise, the Government will respond to industry requests for tariff surtaxes. Thus enjoy some potential protection from competition. The Government is often willing to provide free land for industrial and farming investments.

There are no performance requirements beyond those that might be indicated in individual investment agreements and no requirements for local financing. There are some rules governing the percentage of host country nationals employed, but the Government is flexible on this point. Industrial fishing crews are encouraged to have, on average, five Mauritanian crewmembers per vessel. Foreign firms are encouraged to participate in government-financed research and development programs.

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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Mauritania guarantees any individual or legal entity wishing to undertake business activities on its territory the freedom of establishment in accordance with the laws and regulations in force (Art. 3.1). Private entities may freely establish and own business enterprises, and engage in all forms of remunerative activity. Privatization and liberalization programs have also helped put private enterprises on an equal footing with respect to access to markets and credit.

Protection of Property Rights

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Property rights are protected under the Mauritanian civil code, which is modeled on the French one. However, biased application of the law by the Mauritanian judiciary has been a problem for some local companies. In practice, it can be difficult to gain redress of grievances through the courts. Mortgages exist, however, and are extended by the commercial banks. There is a well-developed system of registration of property in land and real estate. The "Direction des Domaines" at the Ministry of Finance is developing a system to protect land and building property rights.

Mauritania is a member of the MIGA and the African Organization of Intellectual Property (OAPI). In joining the latter, member states agreed to honor intellectual property rights principles and to establish uniform procedures of implementation. These international agreements include the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Hague Convention for the Registration of Designs and Industrial Models, the Lisbon Convention for the Protection and International Registration of Original Trade Names, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Washington Treaty on Patents, and the Vienna Treaty on the Registration of Trade Names. In addition, Mauritania signed and ratified the WTO TRIPS (Trade Role on Intellectual Property and Service) agreement in 1994 but has yet to implement it. The government has also signed and ratified the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) treaties in 1976.

Transparency of Regulatory System

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Privatization and liberalization have been underway since 1994. In the process, the Government has adopted laws that discourage anti-competitive practices and that authorize the creation of consumer interest groups. In 1999 the Government created an "Autorite de Regulation," an agency charged with overseeing the privatization process, using transparent policies and laws to foster competition thorough the bid process. There is not a law or policy in force that impedes foreign investment in Mauritania. Private sector associations exist and their laws and regulations do not discriminate foreign investment.

On September 20, 2005, the Government announced it would join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) that would increase transparency in the use of revenues drawn from mining and petroleum industries. As noted earlier, the Government established the Mauritanian Investment Window ("Guichet Unique") in 1997 in order to streamline bureaucratic procedures for investment. This office has since been renamed the Consolidated Investments Office, and its services have expanded. As a result, transparency has increased and bureaucratic procedures reduced. Since 1998, this office has approved several industrial projects affecting different sectors of the economy.

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

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Government policies encourage, in principle, the free flow of financial resources (see par. 17), and there are no restrictions on access by foreign investors. Most foreign investors, however, prefer external financing, due to the high interest rates and procedural complexities that prevail locally. Credit is often difficult to obtain, and dependent on special relationships with bank owners and officials. Capital assets of the

largest banks could be estimated at about \$7 million. Credit is quite restrictive, and the extent of bad loans is accordingly quite limited.

The government has emphasized banking sector reform. Considerable restructuring has occurred and, with computerization, banking management has improved steadily since 2004. Both the accounting system and regulations covering investments are based on the French model. Nevertheless, deficiencies persist in the enforcement of laws and regulations.

There is no stock market or other public trading of shares in Mauritanian companies. Individual proprietors, family groups, and partnerships generally hold companies. They cannot be freely bought into by outsiders, and portfolio investment is accordingly quite limited.

Political Violence

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The coup d'état that occurred on August 3, 2005 did not provoke any incidents of violence and normal economic activity resumed the following day. There has been no violence against foreigners or economic installations during these last two years. Mauritania continues to maintain good relations with the neighboring countries of Senegal, Mali, and Morocco.

In June 4, 2005, members of the terrorist group GSPC attacked a military outpost based in the extreme northeastern area of the country, at Mauritania's border with Algeria and Mali, killing at least 15 soldiers. The GSPC justified this act as a response to the former Mauritanian President's behavior towards the Islamist leaders.

Corruption

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Corrupt practices are widely believed to exist at all levels of Mauritanian government and society. Wealthy business groups and government officials reportedly receive frequent favors from authorities, such as unauthorized exemption from taxes, special grants of land, and favorable treatment during bidding on government projects. Mauritanian and non-Mauritanian employees at every level, and in every organization, are believed to flout Mauritanian tax laws and filing requirements. The only exceptions to this are the employees of the Mauritanian government, whose income taxes are automatically deducted from their pay. This widespread corruption deprives the central government of a significant source of revenue, weakening the capacity of the government to provide necessary services.

Anti-corruption measures exist, but they have not been effectively enforced. Although the new government has subscribed to a broad good governance program, giving or accepting bribes is still not considered a criminal act under current Mauritanian law. Mauritania is not a signatory to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery. Corruption is most pervasive in government procurement, bank loans, fishing license attribution, land distribution, and tax payments. There is no systematic annual auditing of government accounts.

The only international organization for transparency that operates in Mauritania is the Swiss-based SGS, confined to the inspection of imports. Last September, Mauritania announced its intention to adhere to the Extraction Industry Transparency Initiative (para

30), after repeated requests from the World Bank, IMF and foreign oil explorer consortium.

Bilateral Investment Agreements

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Mauritania has bilateral investment agreements and investment protection with member countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) as well as with Saudi Arabia, France, Belgium and Romania (para 15). In addition, Mauritania is a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union (EU) and the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and thus enjoys free access to the EU market. As a least-developed country, Mauritania benefits from duty-free access to the European market under the Everything-But-Arms initiative. Since 1987, the Government has signed three fishery agreements with the European Union, the last covering the period 2001-2006. Mauritania has no bilateral investment or taxation treaties with the United States.

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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Mauritania currently qualifies for OPIC coverage, but its program is very limited. Potential investors should contact OPIC directly for guidance. A British-Mauritanian insurance company -- Atlantic Londongate -- offers broad commercial coverage. As noted earlier in paragraph 16, Mauritania is a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). The estimated annual U.S. dollar value of local currency used by the Embassy is USD 23.4 million. The Embassy purchases the local currency at an official rate of 268.5 Ouguiya for one dollar.

Labor

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There is a shortage of skilled workers and well-trained technical/managerial personnel in most sectors of the economy. The mining sector is an exception. Professional training centers exist in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou; any company or Government agency interested in improving its employees' skills can do so. Mauritania's population is quite young, with 64 percent of its citizens under 25 years. Government sources estimate that unemployment for males over 18 runs as high as 33 percent. There are unrealistically high expectations of employment in the nascent petroleum sector, where the leading company, Woodside (Australia), is making an effort to train and use local personnel.

Mauritania is a signatory of the ILO Convention. In October 2004, Government updated the Labor Code to conform to 2004 ILO Conventions 138 and 182. It has organized a forum on labor laws and has worked with UNICEF on a survey of two major cities (Nouakchott and Kiffa). In November 2005, the Department of Labor organized a forum on basic worker rights and distributed the newly approved Labor Code issued by the Law no. 017/2004 of July 10, 2004 that suppressed the 1963 original code. The new Government is taking steps to reduce unemployment. To this end, the national agency for the promotion of youth employment has been created to help new graduates looking for their first job. In 2005, this agency received 12,000 applications of which 500 were selected for short-term internships before starting their careers.

Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports

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There are no duty-free import zones. However, the current investment code has introduced for the first time areas called Duty-Free Points Regime or export incentives ("Regime des Points Francs ou Incitations à l'Exportation") for the exclusive use of designated exporting companies. The following are eligible for the Duty-Free Point Regime (Art. 8):

- Production activities and provision of services intended exclusively for exportation.
- Activities intended indirectly for exportation through the complete and exclusive sale of goods or services to enterprises, which export directly. The Duty-Free Points consist of facilities where such activities are carried. They are placed under the control of the Customs Administration (Art 8.2). Enterprises under Duty-Free Point Regime are exempted from any export duties and taxes (Art. 9).

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics

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Mauritania is reported to have received about USD 220 million in foreign direct investment between 2002 and 2004. Exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon deposits and other minerals, including gold, are major areas of investment.

Major foreign private investors in Mauritania include the following:

LOCAL AFFILIATE	FOREIGN PARENT	NATIONALITY
AGS (moving & storage)	AGS France	France
CGA (vehicle sales)	N/A	Japan
Grands Domaines de Mauritanie (agriculture)	N/A	France
Mercure Hotel	Accor Group	France
NOVOTEL Hotel	Accor Group	France
ORYX-Mauritanie (fuel imports/sales)	ADDAX & Oryx	Switzerland
SIPECO (fish)	Ifafood	France
MAFCI (cement)	N/A	France
SODIAP (fish)	Potarg	Ireland
Famo-Mauritanie (food prod's)	N/A	Switzerland
Rex Diamond	Rex Diamond Belgique	Belgium
M.C.P. (fish)	CNF	China
DHL	DHL	Germany
Mattel	Tunisie Telecom	Tunisia
Mauritel Mobiles	Maroc Telecom	Morocco
TOTAL-Mauritanie (oil)	TOTAL Oil	France
SMP Atlas (hydrocarbons)	Atlas	Morocco
Grands Moulins de Mauritanie	ACODIS	France
NAFTEC (hydrocarbons)	NAFTAL	Algeria
Woodside-Mauritania	Woodside Resources	Australia
Dana Petroleum	Dana	Scotland
Maersk (maritime shipping)	Maersk	Denmark
B.H.P.	B.H.P. Minerals	Australia
SOGECO (freight & handling)	SAGA Group	France

Hardman Resources	Hardman Resources	Australia
UPS	UPS	U.S.A.
CODIMEX	TOYOTA	Japan
S.G.S.- Mauritanie	SGS	Switzerland
Sinergie	Sinergie-Belgique	Belgium
Thani Investment (mining)	Thani Investment	United Arab Emirates
Dia Met Minerals	Dia Met Minerals	South Africa
Schenker	Schenker	German
Wintershall	Wintershall	German
Halliburton	Halliburton	U.S.A.
Ashton West Africa Ltd.	North Africa Joint Venture	British
Sphere Investments Ltd. (iron ore)	Sphere Investments Ltd.	Australia
Mauritanian Copper Mining	N/A	Canadian
Tasiast Mauritanie Ltd. (gold)	Defiance Mining Corp.	Canadian

Web Resources

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www.maed.mr
www.ons.mr
www.mmi.mr

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Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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- [How Does the Banking System Operate](#)
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How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

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Most Mauritanian importers finance their transactions through irrevocable and confirmed letters of credit issued by local banks. The bank transfer system is also used when required but this process can delay and is subject to the availability of the foreign exchange in the bank of importer (buyer). Some Mauritanian importers hold bank accounts abroad (in France, Spain, Switzerland, or in Arab countries) that allow them to pay for their imports directly without involving local banks. Since the exchange system was liberalized, most small imports are paid for in cash and the foreign exchange can be easily found in the exchange offices or in the parallel market.

How Does the Banking System Operate

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With only nine commercial banks (the ninth opened recently on January 16, 2006), six insurance companies, three credit agencies, and one leasing company, Mauritania's financial sector remains underdeveloped. Previously modeled on the French system, the banking sector has been restructured and privatized. The Government has sold its equity stake in commercial banks and insurance companies. Consequently, banks have considerably increased their capital and instituted stricter management. They have also begun to receive more customer deposits and to make more rational credit decisions. The Central Bank remains the banking regulatory agency, controls interest rates, commercial bank reserve requirements, and financial and credit management. The Deputy Governor is the president of the Banking Commission in charge of banking system control.

The banks' financial statements are in compliance with international standards and are annually audited by local accounting firms. In practice, the major shareholders of banks tend to obtain a large share of loans, foreign currency and other bank resources for their private affairs, to the detriment of those without special contacts. The government encourages the creation of popular savings and loan institutions to diversify the financial sector and help persons with small accounts.

Foreign-Exchange Controls

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As mentioned above, there are no formal restrictions on transfers of profits or repatriation of capital, royalties, or service fees, provided the investments were authorized and transfer is made through approved banks or exchange offices. Authority to buy and sell foreign exchange has been delegated to the commercial banks and exchange offices, which, normally, carry out transactions upon presentation of appropriate justifying documentation, such as invoices to pay for imports and customs documents. Currently, the Government is trying to control the parallel market for foreign currency, while the disparity between the official market rate is currently 10 Ouguiya; this disparity has been declining since September 2005 when it was 20 Ouguiya.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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There are no U.S. banks in Mauritania. However, almost all commercial banks have correspondent with the U.S. banks. Following are local commercial banks corresponding with U.S. Banks:

Banque Mauritanienne pour le Commerce International (BMCI)

B.P. 622

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Tel: [222] 525-43-49, 525-43-50, or 525-43-51

Fax: [222] 525-20-45

Mr. Moulaye Abass, President

U.S. correspondent: American Express bank

Banque Nationale de Mauritanie (BNM)

B.P. 614

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Tel: [222] 525-26-02 or 525-27-07

Fax: [222] 525-33-97

Mr. Mohamed Ould Noueigued, President
U.S. correspondent: Bank of America

Banque Al Baraka Mauritanienne Islamique (BAMIS)
B.P. 650
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 525-14-24 or 525-22-66
Fax: [222] 525-16-21
Mr. Mohamed Ould Taya, General Manager
U.S. correspondent: Arab-American Bank of New York

Generale de Banque de Mauritanie (G.B.M.)
B.P. 5558
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 525-36-36
Fax: [222] 525-46-47
Mr. Mohamed Ould Bouamatou, President
U.S. correspondent: Citibank

Banque pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (B.C.I.)
Avenue Gamal Abdel Nasser, no.120
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 529-28-76
Fax: [222] 529-28-77
Mr. Isselmou Ould Tajidine, President
U.S. correspondent : Citibank

Project Financing

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Projects financed in 2004 and 2005 include urban development and infrastructure (road construction and repair, airport renovation and extension, ports extension), irrigated agriculture, drinking water supply, environmental protection, education and health development. Apart from the French and multilateral funds noted above, Japanese and German aid financed important projects in the areas of drinking water supply and rural development.

Web Resources

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Export-Import Bank of the United States: <http://www.exim.gov>

Country Limitation Schedule: http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html

OPIC: <http://www.opic.gov>

Trade and Development Agency: <http://www.tda.gov/>

SBA's Office of International Trade: <http://www.sba.gov/oit/>

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ccc/default.htm>

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov>

World Bank: www.worldbank.org

IMF: www.imf.org

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Business Customs

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Mauritania is a Muslim country, and consumption of alcohol and pork are forbidden for Mauritians. The most important characteristic of Mauritanian business practices is courtesy. A handshake is customary upon initiating and closing a business meeting. Occasionally, one may encounter a conservative who will not shake hands with a person of the opposite sex, so it is preferable to wait for a cue from him or her. A polite Mauritanian will ask you several times, possibly in different ways, how you are. Business encounters should begin with a substantial period of small talk or repartee to make the Mauritanian feel at ease.

Rank and protocol are important to Mauritians, and they often (mistakenly or not) believe that they need to work directly with a CEO to make business happen. Business discussions in hotel conference rooms are appreciated. Mauritians are in general hospitable; they often offer a dinner of mechoui (grilled lamb) to their business partners/visitors, and would expect to be treated similarly when they are in the United States. Meals are never shared on a "Dutch treat" basis.

Travel Advisory

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Although Mauritania is a relatively safe environment, visitors are encouraged to register at the consular section upon arrival and/or consult the Department of State's web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov> for general and country-specific travel information. To enter,

you must have a valid visa, which may be obtained at the Mauritanian Embassy at 2129 Leroy Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008, tel. 202-232-5700. Yellow fever vaccination must be noted on a WHO card. Malaria is prevalent in the south, and malaria prophylaxis (mefloquine) is recommended.

Visa Requirements

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U.S. companies seeking to travel to Mauritania should apply for visa entry visa. Application must be sent to Mauritanian Embassy in Washington (see address on chapter 9).

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security options are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

United States Visas.gov: <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

Mauritanian Embassy website: <http://www.mauritania.usembassy.gov>

Telecommunications

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The telecommunications system has undergone considerable modernization and expansion in recent years. Following an initial liberalization beginning in 1999, Mauritania's telecommunications sector now consists of three companies:

- Mauritel, the original national telephone company, now majority-owned by Maroc Telecom, which retains a monopoly over land lines and international calls;
- Mauritel Mobile, a subsidiary, provides GSM mobile phone services; and,
- Mattel, a Mauritanian-Tunisian firm, provides a competing GSM mobile network

As elsewhere in Africa, liberalization and the introduction of mobile phones has permitted dramatic improvements in quality and coverage. Teledensity rose from 0.5 to 10 per 100 people between 1998 and 2004. While Mauritel has 40,000 customers, Mauritel Mobile services 270,000 persons, and Mattel another 160,000. The mobile phone companies also service over 30 localities outside Nouakchott. Mauritel, along with Top Technology, is the main Internet service provider; its Internet network (thanks in part to technology supplied in the 1995 by Harris Corporation (USA)) extends to the 12 regional capitals, with international links via France Telecom, Maroc Telecom and Germany's Intelsat. In urban areas, both demand and access fees for the Internet are high, and the capacity of the few local ISPs is stretched to the limit.

As of June 30, 2004, the Mauritanian Government took another major step in liberalization, opening up Internet service and international calls to competition, and

granting additional mobile phone licenses. Mauritanian companies are actively seeking U.S. partners to take advantage of these new opportunities.

Transportation

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Air transportation infrastructure:

Mauritania has one airline company, the recently privatized Air Mauritanie, which provides regular flights between Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, Casablanca, Paris, Las Palmas, Bamako, Dakar, and down the coast as far as Cotonou. Nouakchott receives weekly flights by Air France (six times), Royal Air Maroc (five times), Tunis Air (three times), Air Senegal (twice) and Air Algerie (once).

In June 2000, the GOVERNMENT privatized Air Mauritanie, selling 65 percent of its shares to local and foreign companies. The airline has since tried to upgrade its fleet and routes, and is now operating with two Boeing 737s. In February 2004, Air Mauritania inaugurated its latest Boeing 737-700, acquired via a seven-year lease from International Lease Finance.

Nominally, Mauritania has four international airports, but only Nouakchott serves a wide spectrum of destinations. The Nouadhibou airport is linked only to Las Palmas, that of Atar receives only seasonal tourist charters from Europe, and the Nema airport, also a potential tourist destination, is not currently open to international flights. The secondary airports have been upgraded in 2005 and there is plan to build a new international airport in Nouakchott, where the existing terminal poses safety and security concerns.

State of Roads

The quantity and quality of roads leaves much to be desired, particularly in the interior. The country's size and climatic conditions make maintenance (and travel) particularly difficult. In 2004, the total road network was estimated at 11,000 km, of which only 4,000 km are paved; there is also a 670 km rail line for the transport of SNIM's iron ore from Zouérate to the port of Nouadhibou. All other goods are distributed in country by trucks or planes. The road density is about 1 km per 100 km² compared to 3 for ECOWAS countries and almost 5 for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. A Government agency, the "Entreprise Nationale de l'Entretien Routier" (ENER) is in charge of road maintenance and repair.

Maritime transportation

Mauritania has two major seaports. The Chinese-built deep-water port in Nouakchott, completed in 1986, has a capacity of about 1.5 million metric tons a year. This "Port of Friendship" is the country's main commercial port and receives about 90 percent of the country's imported goods. It frequently receives ships from Europe, Asia, and occasionally the United States. There is no regular shipping service to the U.S., however, and this is a major impediment to the growth of U.S.-Mauritania trade. Maersk Lines does have fairly rapid service to the U.S., although goods must be transited via Algeciras (Spain), Las Palmas, or Dakar. On April 28, 2005, the Danish Nordana Line maritime transportation opened a maritime line linking Houston and Savannah ports to Nouakchott Port. The representative of Nordana Line in Nouakchott stated hopes that this new maritime will foster trade between USA and Mauritania.

Mauritania's second major seaport, at the northern, "economic capital" of Nouadibou, contains a number of specialized wharfs, two of which are dedicated to traditional and industrial fishing, one to regular commerce, and another to SNIM's massive iron exports. In 2003, Mauritania obtained 45 million Euros from the European Development Fund to upgrade and extend SNIM's minerals wharf, so vital to the Mauritanian economy; to date, the SNIM's wharf has the capacity in receiving the biggest ships to carry its iron to Europe. There is also another special port (including major storage facilities) devoted to offloading petroleum products, destined especially for the iron and fishing industries. The GOVERNMENT also plans to build a fourth deepwater quay at the main commercial port that would accommodate ships with up to 12-meter drafts. Another foreseen project is removal of the over 100 abandoned boats that litter the Nouadhibou harbor and vicinity, something that the EU seems ready to finance.

Language

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Arabic is the official language, but international business beyond the Arab world is often conducted in French. Product literature should be in French, and, if possible, Arabic. The other national languages -- Pulaar, Soninké, and Wolof -- are widely spoken in the south and center of the country.

Health

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There are six overcrowded government hospitals and about 22 private clinics in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. Some clinics provide Western-standard health services. The telephone numbers of the hospitals and private clinics are available at the U.S. Embassy. Medicines are sold over the counter in small drugstores in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. Health concerns include malaria, diarrhea, hepatitis, meningitis, typhoid fever, yellow fever, intestinal parasites, schistosomiasis, rabies, tuberculosis, and AIDS. Yellow fever immunization is required. Validation for cholera may be required for entry. Immunizations recommended include hepatitis A and B, tetanus and diphtheria (Td), polio, and typhoid. Children should be up to date on all immunizations recommended for their age group.

Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays

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Local Time

Mauritania is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and does not observe Daylight Savings.

Business Hours

Businesses operate from Sunday to Thursday. Official business hours in Mauritania are generally 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., though many people get a late start. Walk-in hours at banks are 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The exchange offices are open all day long from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm, and many private shops and services are open until late into the night.

HOLIDAYS

The 2006 official holidays and other days on which Government offices and private establishments are closed are:

Jan 10*	Tue	<i>Id el-Adha (Tabaski)</i>
Jan 31*	Tue	<i>1^{er} Muharram (Muslim New Year)</i>
Apr 11*	Tue	<i>Id el-Mawlud (Prophet's Birthday)</i>
May 1	Mon	<i>Fête du Travail (Labor Day)</i>
May 25	Thu	<i>Journée de l'Afrique (Africa Day)</i>
Oct 24*	Tue	<i>Id el-Fitr (End of Ramadan)</i>
Nov 28	Mon	<i>Fête Nationale Mauritanienne</i>
Dec 31*	Sun	<i>Id el-Adha (Tabaski)</i>

Holidays with an asterisk (*) are based on sightings of the moon. They may vary slightly from the dates published, and change year by year. Such holidays may last two days.

Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings

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Personal effects, including professional equipment, that are carried by hand or in luggage may be temporarily imported into Mauritania free of duties and taxes under the Customs Convention on Temporary Importation of Professional Equipment. Goods imported for exhibitions may enter under an ATA carnet, which may be obtained from the U.S. Council of the International Chamber of Commerce.

Web Resources

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For general information on Mauritania: www.Mauritania.mr

For Communications: www.mauritel.mr

For maritime transportation: www.nordanausa.com; www.nordana.com; www.teissirshipping.com

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Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research, and Trade Events

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Contacts

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U.S. MISSION IN MAURITANIA

American Embassy
2430 Nouakchott Place
Washington, DC 20521-2430
Tel: (222) 525-26-60; 25-26-63
Fax: (222) 525-15-92

Ambassador:
Joseph LeBaron

Deputy Chief of Mission:
Steven Koutsis

Consular, Economic and Commercial Officer:
Anita Ghildyal

USEFUL CONTACTS IN THE UNITED STATES

- U.S. Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Office of Africa, Mauritania Desk
Tel: (202) 377-4388

- The Mauritanian Embassy
2129 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008
Tel: (202) 232-5700

For additional information or assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of Commerce Export Assistance Center nearest you.

MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Investment Promotion Office (Guichet Unique des Investissements)
Ministère des Affaires Economiques et Développement
Boîte Postale (B.P.) 238
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 529-04-35
Fax: [222] 529- 04-35
E-mail: UCP@OPT.mr
Mr. Kelly Oumar Sada, Director

Mauritanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
B.P. 215
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-22-14
Fax: [222] 525-38-95
E-mail: chamcom.mr@caramail
Mr. Mohamedou Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, President

Customs Office

Direction Générale des Douanes
Ministère des Finances
B.P. 198
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-14-04 or 525-63-02
Fax: [222] 525-63-04

Direction of Mines and Geology
B.P. 199
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-3225
Fax: [222] 525-3225
E-mail: dmgsigm@mauritel.mr
Mr. Wane Ibrahima Lamine, Director

National Statistics Office
B.P. 240
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-30-70, 525-39-26, or 525-51-70
Mr. Sidina Ould N'Dah, Director

Regulatory Authority
Tel: [222] 529-1241
Fax: [222] 529-1279
E-mail: kerkoub@mauritel.mr
Mr. Sidi Abdallah Ould Kerkoub, Director

Centre d'Information Mauritanien pour le Developpement Economique et Technique
(CIMDET)
B.P. 2119
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-87-38
Fax: [222] 525-86-48
Email: cimdet@pactec.org
Mr. Moustapha Sidibé, Director

Office National du Tourisme
B.P. 2884
Nouakchott, Mauritania
Tel: [222] 529-0344
Fax: [222] 529-0528
E-mail: ont@mauritel.mr
Ms. Cissé Bent Cheikh Ould Beide, Assistant General Manager

MAURITANIAN PRIVATE AGENCIES

Mauritanian Employers Association
B.P. 383
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-21-60 or 525-33-01
Mr. Mohamed Ould Bouamatou, President

Mr. Seyid Ould Abdellahi, Secretary General

Mining and Industry Association
B.P. 3475
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 525-39-74
Mr. Lafdal Ould Bettah, President

National Fishing Association
B.P. 43
Nouadhibou, Mauritanie
Tel: [222] 574-50-89
Fax: [222] 574-54-30
fnp@toptechnology.mr
Mr. Mohamed Mahmoud Sidina Sadegh, Secretary General

Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development
Tel: [222] 525-92-37
Fax: [222] 525-92-37

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

World Bank
Tel: [222] 525-10-17 or 529-13-59
Fax: [222] 525-13-34
Mr. François Rantrua, Representative

International Monetary Fund
Tel: [222] 529-7203/04
Fax: [222] 529-7057
Mr. Philippe Callier, Representative

UNDP
Tel: [222] 525-24-09 or 525-24-11
Fax: [222] 525-26-16
Ms. Celine Molinier, Representative

AMERICAN COMPANIES AND TRADEMARKS REPRESENTED IN MAURITANIA

AMERICAN COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS OR REPRESENTED IN MAURITANIA

1. Sub-contractors to Woodside for the development of the oil field:

FMC Technologies
(Executive Offices)
200 E Randolph Drive
Chicago, IL 60601

Tel: (312) 861-6000
Fax: (312) 861-6176
E-mail: corportateinfo@fmcti.com

Halliburton
P.O Box 819052
Dallas, TX
Tel: (972) 418-3200
Fax: (972) 4183211
Mr. Roger Rion, C.E.O.

BHI (Baker Hughes Inteq)

Baker Atlas

Weatherford

Tidewater

Oceaneering ROV

2. U.S. companies represented in Mauritania

Northeast Electronic Components, llc
24 Merrimac Street
Amesbury, MA 01913
Tel: (978) 388-9900
Fax: (978) 388-3950
Mr. Sidi Mohamed Ould Bouyah, Rep

EVADAM Inc.
10238 Joseph Campau St.
Hamtramck, MI 48212
Tel: (313) 623-6101
Fax: (313) 584-9158
Mr. Mohamed Hedi Ramadhani, President

Harris Corporation
1025 West NASA Boulevard
Melbourne, Florida
Tel: (321) 674-4520
Fax: (321) 674-4751
Tel: (222) 525-19-46
Fax: (222) 52554-94
Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

TELTRONICS Inc.
2150 Winfield Industries
Saratoga, FL 34243
Tel: (941) 505-9407
Fax: (941) 505-9024

3/7/2006

Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

GULF Communication International
PO BOX 060849
PALM Bay, FL

Tel: (407) 723-7973

Fax: (407) 729-0010

Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

STERLING MERCANT Finance LTD.

1211 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Suite 414 Washington,, D.C. 20036

Tel: (202) 464-5261

Fax: (202) 785-3505

Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

Carson Services

952 BloomingGlen Road

Perkasie, PA 18944

Tel: (215) 249-3535

Fax: (215) 249-1352

Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

Booz ALLEN & Hamilton

8283 Greensboro Drive

Mclean, Virginia

Tel: (703) 902-4932

Fax: (703) 917-2379

Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

JAVEL, Inc.

4155 DOW Road Ste J.

PO BOX 120010 West Melbourne

Melbourne, FL 32912-0010

Tel: (407) 255-5597

Fax: (407) 255-4837

Mr. Chighali Ould Amara, General Manager, PC PARINACOM, Partner

3. U.S. Trademarks represented in Mauritania

Caterpillar

Tel: [222] 525-74-56

Fax: [222] 525-74-55

Mr. Bechir El Hassen, SDPA, Agent/Distributor

Dell, Echostar, Hewlett-Packard, Lanier, 3M

Tel: [222] 525-57-94

Fax: [222] 525-57-95

Mr. Echbih Ould Ahmed Saleck, Top Technology, Agent/Distributor

Philip Morris

3/7/2006

Tel: [222] 525-39-60
Fax: [222] 525-11-59
Mr. Mohamed Ould Bouamatou, Agent/Distributor

Phyto-Riker Pharmaceuticals
Tel: [222] 525-50-19
Dr. Cheikh Brahim Ould Taki, Agent/Distributor

UNISYS
Tel: [222] 525-94-34
Fax: [222] 525-90-25
Mr. Abdallahi El Moctar, Agent/Distributor

UPS
Tel: [222] 525-29-28-89
Fax: [222] 525- 56-57
Mr. Ahmed Baba Ould Azizi, TRANSAC, Representative

Atlantic Motors
Tel: [222] 525-27-40
Mr. Sid'Ahmed Ould Abeidna, Agent/Distributor

Sources: Chamber of Commerce (CIMDET) and Embassy Commercial Section Library.

Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service please go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov/marketresearch.html> and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, but free of charge.

Trade Events

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Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events.

<http://www.export.gov/tradeevents.html>

<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica>

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Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help your business enter and succeed in markets worldwide. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers U.S. businesses, please click on the link below.

<http://www.buyusa.gov/westafrica>

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U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with their nearest **Export Assistance Center** or the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRADE**, or go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov>

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